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The Rothband Employment Scheme

FOR

Sailors and Soldiers
Disabled in the War.

PARLIAMENT
TO THE RESCUE.



SEPTEMBER, 1918.

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This pamphlet is the third that Mr. Rothband has issued on his Scheme for providing Employment for Disabled Sailors and Soldiers.

The first pamphlet, issued at the end of 1916, described the genesis of the Rothband Scheme, its period of bondage in Government Departments, and its exodus into the ampler atmosphere of public discussion. In particular, it gave the fullest details of certain enquiries conducted by Mr. Rothband amongst employers and public men, which revealed a remarkable concensus of sympathy and willingness to help.

The second pamphlet, issued in November 1917, continued the narrative of official obstruction, and dealt with the arguments against the Scheme advanced by Government officials.

The present pamphlet strikes a more hopeful key. It describes the formation of a Parliamentary Committee of both Houses, and discusses in somewhat more detail than has hitherto been possible the machinery for putting the Scheme into execution.

The first pamphlet was mainly narrative and descriptive, and the second (necessarily under the circumstances) somewhat polemical. The present pamphlet is put forward mainly in the hope that it will contribute to the solution of certain practical difficulties.

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General, JAN 26 '20

p 43091

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Principles of the Scheme.

THE ROTHBAND SCHEME is so well known that it is not now necessary to begin by setting it forth in detail ; but its very simplicity, though that has appealed to so many people, has with others, and especially with the official classes, been an obstacle to its adoption. It may help therefore to state once more its governing principles.

First, if the State had a right to take men from their civil employment into the service of their country, it has a corresponding duty to restore these men to civil employment when it has no longer need of them in the Army. There is no right without a corresponding duty. As the right to take on the part of the State implies a corresponding duty to restore, similarly, on the part of the men, the duty to go into the Army at the bidding of the King and at the call of the country's need carries with it a corresponding right to be restored to civil life when they have done their country's work. This right is partly admitted by the Government, but not fully and completely. It is admitted by the grant of pensions for disablement and by the establishment of training schools for disabled soldiers to fit them for new employment. It is again admitted by the State when, in its own capacity as civil employer, it seeks (as it doubtless will) to find as much employment for disabled soldiers as it can in its own offices. It is admitted by the institution of Employment Exchanges and by the recommendation of Sir George Murray's Committee, as long ago as 1915, in favour of the organisation of " public or private appeals to employers in order to secure their goodwill in filling any vacancies that were suitable for disabled men." But the State, which has gone so far as this, has never yet taken the one step further that is necessary to carry out its own principles. It has never said—" I, the State, which set up the machinery for taking these men from their employment, will also set up the machinery for taking them back again and ensuring that

The First
Principle

they have employment. My right to take is my duty to restore—a duty that cannot be devolved on any one else. Their duty to go to the wars is their right to come back to civil work when they are no longer fit for war or wanted at it."

That brings us to the first principle of Mr. Rothband's Employment Scheme, viz., *a national cause took the men; a national appeal, a national action, must restore them.*

Secondly, as this duty cannot be devolved on others, neither can it be commuted in terms of money pensions. The right to work is indefeasible, and it is in the interest of the State that it should be exercised. Work is a commodity that is mainly in the hands of private employers. It follows that State action must take the form of an appeal to private employers, an appeal backed by the highest prestige that it can command and reinforced by the strongest sentiment and the keenest sense of public duty.

That is why the Rothband Scheme insists that *the appeal should be made by the highest authority in the land, and made now, before there is any cooling in the country's gratitude to men who have been disabled in its cause.*

Thirdly, as the men were called on for service in the War, the logical corollary would be to call on the employers to give employment. That is not the Rothband Scheme; but it would have been perfectly just for the State to go to employers and say to them:—" You have a commodity to give, viz., employment, which these disabled men have a right to. I called on them for their lives, and I propose now to call on you to the extent of two or three or more places in your Works according to their size and the number of vacancies." In principle there would be nothing to plead against such action; the objection would all be practical. But the more one objects to *legal* compulsion of that kind, the stronger becomes the argument for *moral* compulsion on employers. Whether the compulsion were legal or moral, it would be in effect a new form of war tax. It is one of the first principles of taxation that it should fall evenly, and not penalise the generous and the patriotic citizen. Therefore

The Second Principle

The Third Principle

the appeal to employers, in justice not only to the men but to the good employers who would otherwise be penalised in competition, must be of such a character as to amount to moral compulsion.

From these three main lines of argument may be deduced all the principles of the Rothband Scheme. It is a scheme to mobilise the country's gratitude to its disabled soldiers and sailors *now* when that is at its full strength. It insists that the State which took from civil work must restore to civil work. There is also a duty on employers to employ—a duty which for good employers will also be a pleasure; and it is the first business of the State in dealing with the problem to standardise this honourable obligation. That can only be done by an appeal which is national, made by the highest authority in the land, at a time when the national sense of obligation is highest—that is now—and in circumstances which are so solemn as to operate as a moral if not a legal compulsion.

The Parliamentary Committee.

More Resolutions of War Pensions Committees WE pass now to the history of the Scheme, which was brought in the last pamphlet down to the correspondence in the summer of 1917 between Mr. Rothband and the Ministry of Labour and Sir Matthew Nathan at the Ministry of Pensions. It was a great advance on the former official attitude to the Scheme that at last the case was being argued, and not merely buried by silence or evasion. But the official arguments against it, which were dealt with in detail in the last pamphlet, were not substantial, and do not seem to have found the least favour outside Government offices. By July 1917 some eighteen War Pensions Committees, including some of the most important in the country, like those of Middlesex and of Manchester, had passed resolutions supporting the Scheme, and these were followed by Resolutions from the Committees of Salford, Flintshire, Dudley, Denbighshire, Hyde, Heywood, Crompton (Oldham), and Bournemouth. As these committees are in the closest practical touch with the problems of unemployment, their support constitutes a formidable body of evidence, and has given Mr. Rothband much encouragement in pressing forward his proposals in the face of official opposition. Nor was that opposition even quite without exception. At least one important official went out of his way to assure Mr. Rothband of his strong sympathy with the Scheme and his anxiety to support it by every means in his power. "I agree with every word of your Scheme," wrote this correspondent; "I will go so far as to say, with all apologies, that it is next to being the obvious thing to do." And again, "The future of the discharged disabled man appals me." In another letter he wrote: "Each day that passes proves to me more than ever that something drastic must be done if we are to avoid the most appalling disaster and disgrace to the country in the future."

Employers and the Scheme

Meanwhile Mr. Rothband continued to receive evidence from employers all over the country of their continued

willingness to support his Scheme. Particulars of the promises already given by employers were set forth in the first of this series of pamphlets, where it was shown that a letter sent out by Mr. Rothband in August 1915 to some 80 of the largest employers in Lancashire and the West Riding of Yorkshire, asking them whether they would be willing to find employment for one or more disabled men, received upwards of 70 replies promising support. A second letter, sent out in the following month to 260 employers of labour in more extended areas and in a greater diversity of trades, brought 200 replies of cordial support. Two years had now elapsed since Mr. Rothband had received these promises, and he thought that the time had come to obtain a renewal of them, lest, owing to the delays interposed by the Government, it should be thought that they had lapsed. The following is the text of a letter which he sent on October 31st, 1917, to all the Employers whom he had addressed in 1915:—

ALEBION WORKS,
PENDLETON,
MANCHESTER.

THE PROBLEM OF FINDING EMPLOYMENT FOR DISABLED
MEN AFTER THE WAR.

“ DEAR SIRS,

“ I beg to ask you to give your earnest consideration to the accompanying pamphlet. In it you will find a clear statement of the efforts I have made to secure the adoption of a Scheme which has been characterised as one of ‘monumental simplicity,’ which has obtained the strong approval of many persons—politicians, literary men, manufacturers and other employers of labour—and which has been very favourably criticised in the Press, but which, in spite of all this, has been turned down by the official authorities to whom it has been submitted. The ostensible grounds for its rejection are set forth in the pamphlet, and, I think, shown to be inadequate and perverse.

"The great importance and pressing urgency of the problem—the postponement of which till the demobilisation of the Forces and the shutting down of the Munition works, when the market will be glutted with able-bodied labour, will infinitely enhance its difficulty—impel me to press most earnestly for an immediate consideration and prompt decision of the question.

"I appeal to you as one of the leading employers in the country who, in response to my first letter of September 1915, expressed their approval of and willingness to co-operate in my Scheme, to renew your promise to employ one or more disabled men. The great influence on public opinion of your first promise will be enhanced by its renewal, and will effectively counteract the fallacious argument of the Ministry of Labour based on the supposed willingness of employers to help only their own men.

"I shall therefore be greatly obliged if you will kindly sign and return the enclosed form as soon as possible.

"Yours faithfully,

"(Signed) HENRY L. ROTHBAND."

Employers' Renewed Promises

From two-thirds of the number addressed Mr. Rothband received replies confirming their previous promises. Most of the remaining third, while expressing still their approval of the Scheme, said that they were already employing their own men who had returned disabled.

The proportion of two-thirds still constant to the Scheme after an interval of more than two years is extremely high, and contrasts very favourably with the proportion of favourable replies received in response to various local appeals. In a speech made on January 17th, 1918—to which reference will be made later—Mr. Rothband gave two striking sets of figures. He said :—

"At the suggestion of the late Statutory Committee the Chambers of Commerce issued a circular to their members asking them to help in supplying employment for disabled officers. To some 2,000 of these circulars, issued by the Manchester Chamber of Commerce, only

21 replies were received. Of an appeal made by the Leeds Local War Pensions Committee to the Leeds Chamber of Commerce asking members to take disabled men (not officers only) into their employment, the following is the record. Out of 800 firms appealed to, 141 replied, and of these only 69 said they could take one or more men at once, while 63 others said they had promised to take back their own men ; so that, including the latter, 132 out of 800—that is only 16 per cent.—responded to the local appeal."

The attractiveness of the national appeal advocated by Mr. Rothband would, tested by these unfavourable statistics, thus seem to be about four times as great as that of a local appeal. This proportion coincides with the result of a plebiscite of employers taken by Mr. Rothband in 1916 on the direct issue of whether a Royal appeal or an appeal by local committees was the better plan. An overwhelming majority declared itself in favour of the national appeal.

These evidences of feeling in the country only confirmed what was already known to those who had taken the trouble to enquire. But the chief new developments in the history of the Scheme in the last six months have taken place in the Houses of Parliament. Notice has already been taken of questions asked in Parliament by Mr. Wing, whose assiduity on behalf of disabled service men is deserving of the highest praise. Mr. Wing continued his policy of persistently questioning the Government throughout the autumn. On the 6th November, 1917, he obtained from Mr. Bridgeman a statement of the number of discharged sailors and soldiers on the registers of the Employment Exchanges on a number of dates in 1915, 1916 and 1917. The numbers given ranged from 388 on 1st April, 1915, to 3,822 on the 12th October, 1917. The figures throughout 1916 and 1917 showed an upward tendency as the year advanced. In answering a further question on November 22nd Mr. Bridgeman admitted that there was difficulty in finding employment for disabled men, and even an increased difficulty, though not, he thought, "to any substantial extent." The following are his exact words :—

Parlia-
mentary
Questions

MR. BRIDGEMAN.—I am not aware that increased difficulty for finding employment for disabled men is being experienced to any substantial extent.

MR. WING.—Is it not a fact that the number of soldiers who are unable to find employment is increasing?

MR. BRIDGEMAN.—My information is that, if at all, it is to a very limited extent.

MR. HOGGE.—Is it not a fact that various Pensions Committees are in a difficulty in dealing with this matter?

MR. BRIDGEMAN.—There is always a certain amount of difficulty in dealing with matters like that, but my information is that it is not increasing to any great extent.

**The
Ministry of
Pensions
Pamphlet**

When the habitual optimism and improvidence of Government Departments are taken into account, these grudging admissions by Mr. Bridgeman are seen to amount to something very serious. They are the more serious because of the artificial dearth of labour in war time. A little pamphlet officially issued from the Ministry of Pensions entitled : “Disabled Sailors and Soldiers. How they are being re-built at the Nation’s Cost—*Ministry of Pensions, Official*”—makes the point very clear. It says :—

“It is easy for even a disabled man to get a well-paid job while the war goes on, but afterwards, when all the soldiers come back and the Government work stops, it will be very difficult; only men in properly good health and well trained will have much chance then.”—(p. 4).

This warning is repeated later (on page 14) in the pamphlet :—

“when the war is over and the able-bodied soldiers come back into civil life, it will not be so easy to get well-paid work. The disabled men, if untrained, will be at a great disadvantage, and there will then possibly be more applications to be trained from them than the Ministry will be able to deal with. It is far better for the men to be trained while the numbers are few than find themselves on a waiting list with little prospects of selection.”

These official warnings are weighty arguments for the National Roll of Employers contemplated by the Rothband Scheme. On November 6th, 1917, Mr. Bridgeman stated that the Minister of Labour was at present in communication with the Minister of Pensions as to the desirability of adopting proposals such as those suggested by Mr. Rothband. On November 22nd, 1917, according to the same authority, the Minister of Labour was still "proposing to confer on the subject" with the Minister of Pensions. This was tardy and procrastinatory, but at any rate it was a considerable advance on the former blank obstructiveness of the Government departments.

As the result partly of Mr. Rothband's energetic advocacy and partly of Mr. Wing's assiduity in the House of Commons, in November of last year there was formed an influential Parliamentary Committee consisting of six Peers and 30 Members of Parliament. With the formation of this Committee the history of the Scheme enters on a new chapter. The campaign for disabled Service men's right to work was transferred from private hands to the public and national arena of Parliament, which, it was recognised from the first, was the ideal, perhaps the one and only, instrument that could carry the project through to success. The frank approval and adoption of the Scheme by representative men, familiar both with legislative and administrative national work, who cannot make themselves responsible for any proposals unless they are sure that they would be for the good of the country, has given to the Scheme a status and a seal of urgency and importance such as it had not before and could not otherwise have achieved. Mr. Rothband was fully sensible of the great progress that his project had made in being taken over by a Parliamentary Committee. It was still his child, but its new Parliamentary step-fathers were able to give it better opportunities of long and beneficent life, and Mr. Rothband would willingly, had he been permitted, have stepped aside and left the work of propaganda to the new Committee. As will be seen presently, Mr. Rothband was not allowed to do so.

**Formation
of a Par-
liamentary
Committee**

**The Names
of the Par-
liamentary
Committee**

The names of the members of the Committee are as follows :—

MARQUESS OF AILESBOURY	LORD LEITH OF FYVIE
LORD BIDDULPH	LORD RATHCREEGAN
LORD DECIES	EARL SONDES
	LORD WENLOCK
Sir C. A. MONTAGUE BARLOW	F. W. MALLALIEU, Esq.
Colonel HARLAND BOWDEN	C. T. NEEDHAM Esq.
Right Hon. Sir Wm. BULL	Sir HERBERT NIELD, K.C.
H. G. CHANCELLOR Esq.	HARRY NUTTALL Esq.
C. A. COCHRANE Esq.	Capt. The Hon. ORMSBY GORE
WILLIAM COOTE Esq.	W. F. PERKINS Esq.
Right Hon. T. R. FERENS	BASIL PETO Esq.
WILLIAM FIELD Esq.	ATHELSTAN RENDALL Esq.
S. GALBRAITH Esq.	Sir JOHN RANDLES
Major C. G. C. HAMILTON	JOHN E. SUTTON Esq.
J. G. HANCOCK Esq.	C. B. STANTON Esq.
A. G. C. HARVEY Esq.	Rt. Hon. Sir CHAS. E. SWANN,
J. S. HIGHAM Esq.	ROBERT TOOTILL Esq. [Bart.
T. O. JACOBSEN Esq.	TOM E. WING Esq.
BARNET KENYON Esq.	Sir A. W. YEO

The following Members of the House of Lords and the House of Commons expressed their willingness to support the Parliamentary Committee, though they could not, for various reasons, become active members of it.

LORD CHARLES BERESFORD	LORD HATHERTON
LORD CASTLETOWN	LORD HILLINGDON
LORD DE FREYNE	LORD NAPIER OF MAGDALA
LORD DUDLEY	LORD PLAYFAIR
LORD GISBOROUGH	EARL OF YARBOROUGH
Sir GEORGE AGNEW, Bart.	Major E. F. MORRISON BELL
Sir JOHN AINSWORTH, Bart.	J. PARKER Esq.
E. M. ARCHDALE Esq.	Rt. Hon. THOMAS RICHARDS
Lt.-Col. Sir FREDERICK HALL	G. R. THORNE Esq.
Sir JOHN JARDINE, Bart.	Capt. E. FITZHERBERT WRIGHT

A great many other members of both Houses wrote in favourable or interested terms of the Scheme. Among them were :—

LORD BISHOP OF BANGOR
LORD DESBOROUGH
VISCOUNT ELIBANK
LORD BISHOP OF EXETER

R. ARMITAGE Esq.
WALDORF ASTOR Esq.
Sir JOHN H. BARRAN, Bart.
Rt. Hon. ARTHUR HENDERSON
Major J. W. HILLS
JOHN HINDS Esq.
D. M. MASON Esq.

LORD PARMOOR
MARQUESS OF SALISBURY
EARL STRATHMORE

General PAGE-CROFT
Right Hon. WALTER RUNCIMAN
PHILIP SNOWDEN Esq.
Sir JOHN SPEAR
Rt. Hon. J. H. THOMAS
WILL THORNE Esq.

Others who wrote in sympathetic terms were Lord Raglan, Lord Sydenham, Lord Howe and General Sir Aylmer Hunter-Weston, M.P. Lord Sydenham wrote on November 11th, 1917, "I still think that your Scheme holds the field." Lord Raglan said : "Some little experience as a member of the Chelsea Board of Commissioners during the Boer War convinced me that the whole future of disabled men depends far more on their receiving adequate work than on their pensions. Nothing is worse than to leave them to drag out a useless existence on a small or even a fairly respectable pension." General Sir Aylmer Hunter-Weston, who showed himself by a brilliant speech in the House of Commons in January, 1918, to be the best interpreter of the mind of the Army, not only wrote most approvingly of the Scheme to Mr. Rothband, but used his influence in its favour with Members of the Government. "There may," he wrote, "be good reasons for the official attitude, but I confess that it is at present incomprehensible to me. With my present knowledge, I should say your Scheme must be of great value and cannot do harm." And again—"It seems to me to be such an excellent Scheme that I cannot understand why there should be any opposition to it. . . . I need hardly say that anything that has to do with the welfare of our soldiers

is a matter of the first importance to me." Another correspondent who wrote encouragingly from time to time was Sir Frederick Milner, to whose keen and persistent advocacy reference has been made in the former pamphlets. Some correspondents opined that the chief cause of opposition to the Scheme was its simplicity, and indeed one of the most remarkable facts in the whole of this long argument about the Scheme has been the singular lack of initiative shown by the bureaucracy. Even when they were taken to the stream, it was impossible to make them drink. This inertia on the part of the permanent officials has been by far the most serious obstacle that Mr. Rothband has had to encounter, and the formation of a Parliamentary Committee was doubly welcome because it promised to bring a steady and continuous pressure to bear on the Government Departments.

**Mr.
Rothband's
Speech to
the Parlia-
mentary
Committee**

The first Meeting of the Parliamentary Committee was held at the House of Commons on December 13th, 1917. Mr. Wing, who had taken so prominent a part in forming the Committee, was appointed Chairman, and he called upon Mr. Rothband to address the meeting. Mr. Rothband began by quoting the official pamphlet on the disabled sailors and soldiers (from which extracts have already been given on page 12), and went on to explain that his own Scheme was supplementary to, and not a rival of, the work already done by the Ministries of Labour and of Pensions in providing training schools. So far as it went, that work was all to the good, and everyone must congratulate those who planned it and carried it out. But, Mr. Rothband asked, how far would it go to meet the tens of thousands of cases of disabled men after the War? What percentage of these men could ever be trained to do anything approaching what would give them a chance of competition with able-bodied men? And what would be the proportion of men who cannot be trained at all? Writing to him Sir Matthew Nathan had said that the number of disabled men who would get work even from good employers must "depend largely upon the extent to which the disabled men can do useful work, and that in turn on the extent to which by treatment and training their

industrial powers have been restored to what they were before their injuries, or have been made even better than that." But, Mr. Rothband asked, what about all the other disabled men, who will far outnumber those who cannot be trained to the degree to which Sir Matthew Nathan looks forward so hopefully? What provision is going to be made to find employment for *them*? Of course they will have their pensions, but most of them will want work as well, and he saw no other possible means of getting it for them than *by the enrolment of willing employers in response to a National appeal*. It was for the sake of these men especially that he earnestly pleaded for the support of the Parliamentary Committee for the Scheme he had proposed.

He went on to speak of the failure of local appeals to which reference has been made above (pages 10, 11). It was not, he said, lack of patriotism or benevolence or sympathy that stopped employers from responding to private appeals. It was because they felt that they were being appealed to as individuals only, not as a part of a national organisation; that if they and a few others responded, it would go a very little way towards solving a national difficulty, and that they would be taking upon their shoulders an unfair proportion of a burden which should be equitably distributed among all employers. But to an appeal made by the highest representative of the nation to all employers simultaneously throughout the kingdom there would be a ready and almost universal response, and there would be very few who would like to face the invidious position of having their names omitted from such an historical record as would be formed by a public National Roll of patriotic employers.

Mr. Rothband emphasized the value of a permanent record like the National Roll. When once the names of willing employers were placed on that Roll and on the district lists into which it would be divided, they would remain there on record as long as the need for helping disabled men continued, and their successors would recognise the moral obligation of the promise made by their predecessors. After

the war, when we are sick of it and all that reminds us of it ; when we are no longer stimulated and enthused by hearing and reading of the splendid deeds which these men perform, we may forget our obligations to them—it was so after former wars, it is to be feared that it may be so after this War. Here was one way at least in which that shame and disgrace could be averted, and it was to make sure of that one way that he appealed for the help of the Committee, who, as the representatives of the people, as the supreme authority and power in the land, could secure its adoption, and in whose hands it lay to make it impossible for a single disabled sailor or soldier to say in the future, as, alas ! so many had said in the past after former wars—"I was wounded and broken in fighting for you and yours. I ask, not for charity, but for work—and I cannot get it."

After questions had been put to and answered by Mr. Rothband, two Resolutions were carried unanimously by the Committee :—

1. "That this Meeting approves of the proposal to form a National Roll of Employers on the lines suggested by Mr. Rothband."
2. "That this Meeting form a deputation to wait upon the Minister of Labour to lay before him the Rothband Scheme."

The Depu-tation to the Minister of Labour

The Parliamentary Committee met a second time on January 16th, 1918, and appointed a deputation to wait on the Minister of Labour, which was received at Montagu House on the following day, January 17th, by Mr. Roberts, who was accompanied by Mr. Bridgeman, M.P. (the Parliamentary Secretary of the Ministry of Labour) and by other officials of the Department. We must content ourselves here with a summary of the proceedings. The deputation was introduced by Mr. Wing, who made two points amongst others—(1) that the Scheme was meant to include not only manual labourers, but clerks, managers, and even the professional classes who might need to be put into touch with those who should require their services, and (2) that the Scheme had the support of a very large number of Pensions

Committees, who were often asked for advice and help about employment, but at present could only give talk, because they had no means at hand to provide the actual employment. The Minister of Labour asked for a list of these Pensions Committees, adding very justly that "evidence of that kind was always very strong."

Mr. Rothband spoke second. After explaining the principles on which he had framed the Scheme, he went on to meet certain objections that had been raised to it, and to show why the matter could not be left to the unregulated and unorganised humanity and patriotism of employers; and, further, why local appeals without initial impetus from the State must necessarily fail. "As the War was national, embracing all localities and districts in one great crisis, and making every single soldier and sailor a champion fighting for the whole country, so every effort made on their behalf, every contribution, whether in pensions or in wages, given to help them and alleviate their lot, ought to be part and parcel of a national movement." He once more reviewed the early history of the Scheme, and recalled the strong sympathy and definite promises that he had got from employers all over the country two and a half years before.

After Colonel Bowden had spoken of the urgency of the problem, Mr. Bridgeman put some questions to Mr. Rothband which suggested a doubt as to the value of the promises given by employers—questions which showed that he was evidently not then fully informed of the nature of the correspondence between Mr. Rothband and the employers in 1915, and of the fact that their promises had been in the majority of cases renewed in the autumn of 1917 (*see pages 9, 10*). He thought that the answers were "vague," and apparently his standard of definiteness was that the employers should agree to take any kind of disabled men that were offered. They should say whether they were prepared to find a vacancy for any man the Committee might send to them. That surely was to set up a wholly impossible standard for any contract of employment, whether of disabled or hale men. As Mr. Rothband explained, the employer alone is in a position to

judge, from his knowledge of the details of the work required, what job will suit what kind of disabled man, and he gave some instances from the work of his own firm, whose practical application of the Scheme may be judged from the subjoined statistics.*

Mr. Bridgeman later stated his criticism in a somewhat different form, when he said that he could not see any difference between the people who, *as things were*, answered Mr. Rothband's circular, and the ordinary employer who was not reluctant to take disabled men. But Mr. Roberts, the Minister of Labour, himself answered the objection in that form by interposing the remark that "the labour market is very good just now." Colonel Bowden summed the matter up briefly by the just if seemingly cynical remark that human nature was "like a flock of sheep," adding that "if you make this national, people will be ashamed to be out of it." Mr. Bridgeman's questions were valuable as clearing up possible misunderstandings, and, of course, did not necessarily imply that he was antagonistic to the Scheme, still less that he was lacking in sympathy with the claims of disabled men.

The Minister of Labour's Reply

The Minister of Labour in his reply admitted that the question was one of urgency and should not be postponed until after the War, when the passing of time would wear away the sense of obligation that we owed to these men, and he thought that the Committee were doing very useful work in creating a healthy sense of a national responsibility. But he would like to know whether the deputation proposed that the preparation of the Roll should be undertaken by a Government Department. To this Mr. Rothband replied: "Yes; but whether the Department should be the Ministry of Pensions or of Labour, he preferred to leave to the Government." Mr. Roberts then pointed out that the work of preparing the lists would be very great, and that, while he

* These statistics afford a striking example of what can be done by a "willing employer." On October 12th, 1917, out of a total of 521 men employed in one of the works, 68 were disabled sailors and soldiers, only nine of whom had been in the firm's employment before the War. Amongst them were men who had lost a leg, an arm, a hand, an eye, or who were suffering from "shell-shock" or partial paralysis of a limb, and their occupations ranged from that of clerk, supervisor, and foreman, to that of labourer.

and his Department were not prejudiced in any way against the proposal, they had to look at it from a practical point of view. If they decided to adopt the Scheme, it would involve considerable organisation, and that would necessitate negotiations with the Treasury and consultation with the Ministry of Pensions. After these had been held he would ask the Committee to come and discuss the matter with him again.

The reception of the deputation by Mr. Roberts was distinctly favourable, and it was clear that the opposition to the Scheme in Government quarters did not come from the Ministry of Labour. The idea that Trade Unionism had any bias against or even suspicion of the Scheme was thus disposed of. The main upshot of the conference was to show that the question of machinery for carrying out the Scheme occupied a far larger place in the thoughts of the Government than was generally supposed, and Mr. Roberts' reply amounted to a suggestion that the Parliamentary Committee should give its attention to that point. This the Committee proceeded to do.

Two Official Statements.

Mr. Roberts on the Duty of the State

Before passing on to the consideration of the machinery for carrying out the Scheme, note may be taken here of two later official statements, one by the Minister of Labour in an address to the Labour Advisory Committee at Smethwick on May 27th, 1918 ; the other a speech by Mr. Hodge in Parliament on May 27th, 1918, explaining the work of his Ministry. Mr. Roberts spoke generally of the future of our soldiers and sailors after the War, when they would have to return to civil life, and not particularly of the disabled men who are the concern of the Rothband Scheme ; but there is a great deal in common between the principles applicable in both cases. Mr. Roberts made the point that centralisation might be a danger—a point that, properly understood and with the necessary safeguards, is a perfectly good one, and is further illustrated in the next section on the “Machinery” of the Rothband Scheme. He went on to speak in a very liberal tone of the duty which the State owed to discharged soldiers, and declared that “we should never tolerate the spectacles we had witnessed after previous wars of scarred warriors at street corners begging for bread and boots.” It is not necessary to remind those interested in the Rothband Scheme that the shame of these sights has been a constant stimulus to its author in his efforts on behalf of disabled soldiers and sailors. But if it is right that the State should do everything that it can to help to new employment men discharged from the Army who are still in possession of their full faculties, how much more binding is the obligation on the State to help those who by reason of their disablements are no longer in a position to compete on equal terms in the labour market ! What way is there of ensuring that these men shall have a fair chance except by enlisting the sympathy of employers before the end of the War, and funding it in an obligation to pay the common debt to these men in the currency which they and they only have at command —the currency of honourable and protected employment ?

Mr. Hodge's speech was discursive and touched on a great variety of topics, but on the subject of employment he had comparatively little to say. Yet, as Sir John Barran indicated in a speech made later in the debate, the problem of finding employment for disabled men as distinct from the problem of training them for employment is of the highest importance. He pointed out that out of every four men discharged from the Army, three looked to the Ministry of Pensions for their employment, and if they did not get it from that source, there was no one else to whom they could look for it. It is as a contribution to this practical question of finding employment that the Rothband Scheme must stand or fall. It does not put itself forward as a rival to the various schemes of cure and training that the Government has taken up, but as a supplement—a necessary supplement—to them.

Now let us see what the Minister of Pensions had to say on this question of employment, which, when all is said, is the end, whereas all the curative and ameliorative institutions described by Mr. Hodge are only means to the end. By its success in securing this end for each and every soldier and sailor victim of the War the Government will be judged. The men are asking not for charity but for justice. Mr. Hodge made three references to the problem of employment. There was first an appeal to all municipalities and public utility companies who require messengers to give the preference to one-armed men. Excellent! but why deal with the problem in this piece-meal fashion? Why not set the ingenuity of every employer in the country to work on the task of finding openings for the employment of this and every other kind of disability? That is what the Rothband Scheme would do. First get your promises from employers. They will find the means of honouring them. Then Mr. Hodge advanced the dubious proposition that when a man is not in a perfect state of health, it is better for him to be working for himself rather than for an employer. Surely in nine cases out of ten a man with a disability is better off with an employer who is under an honourable duty to help

**A Warning
against
Exploitation**

him, than he would be if he had to bear the whole burden of it alone. But, said Mr. Hodge, some employers are not to be trusted.

"Recently several cases of exploitation of disabled men have come before me. I cannot find language strong enough to express my condemnation of anyone so mean as to seek to take advantage of a disabled man. As to whether it may be possible to introduce legislation to protect the disabled man from exploitation I cannot say. At the moment we are considering the subject, and if it is possible to frame an Act of Parliament close enough to get at people of that kind, I, at any rate, shall not hesitate to ask the House of Commons for the power essential to give effect to this idea."

Mr. Hodge's denunciation of this particular form of mean tyranny was not a whit too strong ; but he has not got very far in his consideration of the most practical means of preventing it. Obviously he has doubts as to the possibility of drafting a workable Act of Parliament for the purpose ; and indeed, if you could stop the exploitation of disabled men by Act of Parliament, you could and should stop the exploitation of anyone and everyone by the same means, and so make the industrial world much more contented and happy than it would be outside of Utopia. You cannot do it in that way. The best of all curbs to this heinous exploitation of disabled men is the creation of a public conscience so strong, so sure and infallible in the stigma that it fastens on any violation of its code of honour, that no one dares do a wrong thing. This can be done by the National Roll proposed by the Rothband Scheme. The formation of such a Roll would not only set a standard of public duty in the treatment of the disabled, but it would give every employer an interest in seeing that membership of the Roll was not disgraced by unworthy conditions of employment imposed by another and possibly rival employer. Inscription on the National Roll suggested by Mr. Rothband would be like the membership of a well-managed Society. It would exact obedience to the code of honour and carry with it certain disciplinary rights, the penalties of ostracism if

**The Real
Safeguards
against Ex-
ploitation**

membership were abused, and opportunities of supervision with regard to all the conditions of employment that could not be exercised in any other way. Here is a strong automatic check on the exploitation which Mr. Hodge so justly condemns, and one far more certain in its action than any Act of Parliament that could be drafted.

But there are other means of preventing exploitation such as can only exist under the Scheme, and for which no Act of Parliament, supposing one could be framed and administered, could be a substitute. There are the Trades Advisory Committees throughout the country. When once you have by a National appeal created your Roll, the carrying out and superintendence of its obligations might well be devolved on local bodies. The names of employers who had promised to find employment would be printed in a book and circulated like a Telephone Directory amongst employers, and in particular for the use of the Trades Advisory Councils. It might be made their duty to register the fulfilment of employers' promises to employ disabled men. They would act as a Court of Honour in all cases of alleged injustice or exploitation of disabled men; and they could punish breaches of the code of honour by leaving an offending employer's name out of the annual edition of the Roll. The Register of the names would thus become a Book of Honour. It would also be a book in which any employer might, by the mere absence of his name, be made liable to all the disabilities which are far more effectual as deterrents to evil practices of this kind than the risk of prosecution under an Act of Parliament.

The Machinery.

No Costly Department needed

After the interview with Mr. Roberts, Colonel Bowden drafted the framework of a plan of registration for carrying out the idea of the National Roll. The main idea of his proposals was to save expense and to avoid the setting up of a new Department or greatly expanding an old one. It must be remembered, too, that there has been a great deal of grumbling in the newspapers at the multiplication of Government employees which was objected to on a number of different grounds, as that they are wasteful of man power, and costly out of all proportion to their public services. A still more potent reason, though one that was less openly avowed, was that the English mind has an instinctive dislike of bureaucracy, if not of the individual bureaucrat, and a distrust, not altogether without foundation, of his mental habits and of the inertia which makes him so reluctant to meet an emergency before it overwhelms him. But in all this popular prejudice there was much that was unreasonable. In estimating the cost of a scheme of great public utility and justice like this, it must be remembered that the gains of successful administration, moral as well as financial, invisible as well as visible, should in fairness be deducted from the cost. These assets may so far outweigh—usually in fact they do so—the costs of administration, that the latter are hardly to be taken into account. The financial gains to the cost of pensions under such a Scheme as Mr. Rothband's, if it were in successful operation, would be very great, and in addition there are what we have called the invisible assets—the greater public security, the absence of inflammable discontent, and the enhanced prestige of the Government and confidence in its justice; greater harmony between the classes, and more power to the more moderate elements in the labour war which some expect to come with the conclusion of peace in the real war.

The Dangers after Peace

Our experience after past wars has taught us to expect at the end of this war a relaxation of some of those

moral restraints which normally keep our countrymen peaceful and law-abiding. The transition from a state in which disputes are settled by violence to the state of ordered peace in which they are settled by sweet reasonableness and in accordance with the laws of social justice will not, even under the best of circumstances, be an easy one. War always produces a moral upheaval, and this war, incomparably the greatest there has ever been, is not likely to make an exception to the rule. All the more reason, therefore, why we should remove the explosive matter of social or industrial injustice arising out of the war. With what face shall we be able to repress disorder, and to punish crime as it deserves, if the agitator or the criminal can plead that the State has done him an injustice, and that in resorting to violence he is only employing the last resource used by the State itself in the settlement of its quarrel with Germany? No, we must leave no excuses of that kind lying about. Having pulled to pieces industrial and family life for the common good, the State must use its whole prestige and authority to reconstruct the edifice, and this duty is doubly binding in the case of those whom the war has incapacitated and left incapable of competing on equal terms with their fellows in the labour market. There must be no *laissez faire* where the welfare of the family and the individual human soul is concerned. Where the State has impaired a man's earning power, it must repair his resources, and when peace is restored, protect him from being thrust to the wall in the economic struggle for existence.

It is surely in the interests of employers, of organised labour and of all classes, that our soldiers should be absorbed into the trade and commerce of the nation as quickly as possible and with the minimum of heartburnings. Indeed this smooth transference from the Army back to civil life is the prime condition of success for any of the projects which we group together under the blessed word "Reconstruction."

The argument of cost ought not therefore to be allowed to obtrude itself between us and a complete and efficient settlement of this great problem. At the same time, as

prudent men we should naturally wish that the machinery for carrying out the Scheme should be as economical as is consistent with efficiency. Moreover simplicity makes for ease and smoothness of working.

**Colonel
Bowden's
"Working
Plan"**

The machinery proposed by Colonel Bowden is as follows:—

1. The original appeal to be made by His Majesty in a signed letter to the nation issued through the press, every newspaper at the same time bringing out a description of what is required in the way of voluntary effort on the part of the country, with details of the working of the Scheme.
2. The Minister concerned will then only have to write a few letters, which would not hamper his ordinary staff, such letters to be addressed to the Lords-Lieutenant of Counties, enclosing His Majesty's letter, with directions how to proceed and what is required.
3. The Lords-Lieutenant of the Counties will then communicate these directions to Chairmen of County Councils, Lord Mayors and Mayors of Boroughs, instructing them to take from the local register the addresses of all factories, large and small, wholesale and retail traders, joint stock companies, banks, insurance companies, large landowners, shippers, etc., and to send them a reminder of His Majesty's appeal, with a letter exactly on the lines of that previously used by the designer of the Scheme, Mr. Rothband.
4. Answers to the letters would be received by the local authority who issues the appeal to the employer. The answers will be headed on the envelope "Disabled Soldiers." They will not be opened by the local authority, but immediately packed, kept within their parcel or sack labelled with the name of the town or county district, and forwarded in due course through the Lords-Lieutenant to a small headquarters in London, which will have to be prepared in connection with the Ministry concerned. (But see observations later on this section.)

Everyone of the staffs thus involved are not only ready to help, but most anxious to feel that they can do something of national importance. Thus work which would otherwise be colossal for a Department would be divided amongst ready and willing workers throughout the whole country, spreading downwards step by step from His Majesty to the actual worker.

5. In the meantime the Minister will have prepared a number of large bound books each representing a county, the name of the county boldly shewn on its binding, in which will be arranged columns for the purpose of putting in alphabetical order each town or district. Opposite these alphabetical lists of towns or districts will be columns ready to receive in alphabetical order the names of the employers, and in horizontal columns opposite the names of these employers will be suitable spaces left for the description of the employer, the average number of hands employed by his firm, and the number of disabled soldiers he is willing to take, with a marginal space for notes, such as the identification of the men actually sent to the employer.
6. On receipt of these packages, Colonel Bowden has already intimated to Mr. Roberts the readiness of the Chairman of the Rothband Committee, Mr. Thomas Wing, M.P., of Mr. Rothband, and of other members of the Committee, to supervise the actual registration. The work could be done speedily and efficiently by half a dozen intelligent young ladies, who would only be required for the few weeks necessary to complete the compiling of the register in the above form.
7. On completion, the register could then be printed, and copies of each district sent to each local authority concerned.

This working plan was adopted by the Parliamentary Committee, and has been laid before the Minister of Labour. It is claimed for it that it would leave the whole of the working control under the Department at the minimum expenditure of departmental energy, and that it avoids the "possible and undesirable exploitation of our disabled soldiers by any association or party for ulterior motives."

The principles of this plan are undoubtedly sound, but it does not pretend to be verbally inspired and the details may be subject to modification. It has been suggested, for example, on section (2) of Colonel Bowden's plan, that the Town Clerks and Clerks of the County Councils might receive the Ministerial instructions and distribute the copies of the King's letter to employers and receive their replies. But though some economy might be effected in this way, there

**Comments
on the
"Working
Plan"**

is a certain appropriateness in the appeals being distributed in the first instance through the Lords-Lieutenant, who are the representatives of the King in each county. There are dangers, as has already been pointed out in these pages, in localising the appeal at any rate in its initial stages. Devolution in working is necessary, and, as will be seen presently, it might at one point be carried much further than it is under Colonel Bowden's plan. But the use of the Lords-Lieutenant as channels of official communication rather than the Council Clerks does prolong by another stage of the journey from King to people the essentially national character of the Scheme.

The only opening for real doubt would seem to arise on section (4). The framers of the working plan had to choose between making its control purely departmental and extending the principle of local devolution; and they preferred the first alternative, apparently for the reason already given, that it would avoid the risk of exploitation by local associations for ulterior motives. Hence the provision that letters should be forwarded unopened by the local authority to a small headquarters in London. The choice, however, must depend very largely on the views of the Minister in Charge, and it is conceivable that he might prefer to extend the system of local assistance in the work of administration. If that be so, his wishes could be easily met, and that without the slightest risk to efficient working and with some gain to economy. Instead of sending the replies to London unopened to be sorted and classified there by a central organisation, they might be dealt with locally by executive bodies in the several towns and districts in the following manner:—

All replies when obtained should be filed on a card-indexing system and entered up in duplicate in ledger form: (a) a loose-leaved ledger form for the central organisation in London, and (b) a copy of this for the use of the local executive. These loose-leaved ledger forms should be fitted in permanent bindings, which, when filed, would constitute a permanent ledger in themselves.

The advantages of this method would be (1) that the local bodies, with their necessarily fuller knowledge of the employers in their respective areas, would be better able to get the maximum number of willing employers than would a central body at a distance; and (2) that the labour of sorting and classifying and entering up the replies would be so sub-divided that the burden and cost would be greatly lessened, especially if a large amount of voluntary help by expert accountants in the several towns could be obtained for such a truly patriotic and benevolent task. Moreover, the local bodies would be in a position to know what proportion of the employers in their districts had responded, and to stir up the laggards by a second and third appeal, if necessary, and they could canvass them far more effectively than an official body at headquarters.

As there are indexed lists of employers in their districts at all Labour Exchanges, and the names and addresses of the members of the various professions (such as stockbrokers, accountants, lawyers, insurance companies and the like) are contained in their several Directories, the local organisations would have no difficulty in obtaining all the necessary information as to the persons to whom the appeal should be sent, and following it up with subsequent appeals.

Finally, we would suggest as an appendix to the last section of Colonel Bowden's plan (*page 28*) the following addition, viz., to supply annually to each employer of labour who is on the National Roll as having promised to find employment for Disabled men a copy of the annual local edition of the "NATIONAL ROLL OF EMPLOYERS," to be published in the form of the National Telephone Directories, for the use of Trades Advisory Committees, to enable them to carry out the functions suggested above on pages 24, 25. This annual edition would be found to be a valuable constant help so long as the need exists, and would stimulate the interest of Trades Advisory Committees in their work of placing disabled men in employment either through or with the co-operation of the Labour Exchange Bureaus,

and also of exercising disciplinary powers of the kind exercised by the Committees of a well-managed Society.

National and central initiative is the prime essential, and the advocacy of Mr. Rothband's Scheme has missed no opportunity of underlining it. It is the keystone of the whole edifice. But without loosening this keystone it would be possible to carry the principle of devolution a little further than in the working plan, and it has from the first been recognised that, *provided the initiative be national*, local co-operation is not only desirable but necessary. On this matter, however, the views of the responsible Department must be finally decisive.

Postscript.

Though the foregoing narrative affords to the promoters and advocates of the Rothband Scheme grounds for encouragement and hope in the mere fact of its recognition, not only by Members of both Houses of Parliament but also by Ministers and their Departments, as a reasonable solution which they cannot ignore of an urgent and difficult problem, yet the procrastination and delay which have dogged its footsteps ever since the proposal came within the purview of official attention may well have made the hearts of its friends sick with hope deferred.

The problem with which it deals has, as everyone knows, grown more difficult, more complicated, more pressing with every day of the War. The stream of disabled men pouring into the country has increased in volume and overflowed the streets of every town and village in the land, and daily and hourly the sight of the maimed and scarred and bandaged men in blue challenges each one of us with the question—"What are you going to do with us, and for us, when the War is over?" We cannot, we dare not, we do not, thank God! shirk the insistent questioning of our hearts by asking the cynical question—"Am I my brother's keeper?" We know—and we gladly and gratefully admit it—that one and all of us, who have escaped their lot because they have fought on our behalf, are responsible for their future lives—responsible not only for alleviating their pain and suffering, not only for providing them with pensions and allowances which will keep them and their dear ones from want and starvation, but also for restoring them, so far as is possible, to their former conditions of life in the community. Before the War, to which they went at their country's call, the vast majority of these men worked for their livelihood. They were labourers and artisans and miners and railway porters and clerks. They went forth day by day to their labour until the evening, and they were contented so to live their lives. And the bulk of them want to go back to their old

lives, drab and hard and joyless though some of those lives may have been. To help as many of them as possible to do so is the aim and purpose of the Rothband Scheme. With the aid of the Parliamentary Committee some little progress has been made towards the achievement of that aim, and it is not the fault of the members of that Committee that the progress has not been greater. But those whose hearts are in the work, when they look back on the struggles and disappointments of their efforts, cannot but sigh with Browning—

“ Oh, the little more, and how much it is !
And the little less, and what worlds away ! ”

If only a few more Peers and Members of the House of Commons would join and support the Parliamentary Committee and raise their voices in support of the Scheme—a Scheme “ of monumental simplicity ” as it has been described by one of the most distinguished English authors of to-day—a Scheme which is no rival of any other scheme, private or official, but one that would be supplementary and helpful to all other schemes—its adoption would speedily be certain and the future lives of thousands of the men who have sacrificed so much for us, and whom, when all is said and done, we can repay in such scant measure, would be made secure.

To all who read these lines we earnestly appeal to “ come over and help us.”

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